



February 7, 2025

Dear Student/Parent/Faculty Member:

Public, private, and home-based Middle School (6th - 8th Grade) and High School (9th - 12th Grade) students in the DC, Maryland, Virginia regions of The Aerospace Corporation's East Coast operations are invited to participate in The Aerospace Corporation's 48th Annual Robert H. Herndon Memorial Science Competition on **Thursday, May 22, 2025**. The theme for this year's event is **Realizing Our Future in Space**.

The competition is held to evaluate projects and written essays submitted by Middle School and High School students. Winners will be selected based on originality and a demonstrated understanding of the subject matter. Project teams may have up to 2-3 members each. Project participants for the East Coast Competition are recruited from Regional Science Fairs. Essays submitted must address the theme **Realizing Our Future in Space**. Essays are to be written individually.

In keeping with the long-range goal of this competition, which is to increase participation in engineering and science professions, this competition is open to all students who show an interest in science or math. All entries will be evaluated by the science competition's steering committee. **Online registration is required for participation.**

Security requirements at our facility require that each faculty advisor bring photo identification. Please complete the experiment and essay attendees' forms by **March 7th, 2025**. Please indicate **adult** attendees who are not U.S. citizens. Non-citizens will be required to show a green card or a passport to gain access to our facilities. A teacher or other faculty member must accompany students to the event.

The schedule for the day includes an orientation, a continental breakfast, experiment judging, Aerospace engineering talks, a luncheon, a keynote address, and the awards presentation. The event will adjourn at approximately 2 p.m. If you have any questions, please email us at herndonscience@aero.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clyde Moseberry
Chairperson

Dr. Sandor Der
Co-Chair

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ESSAY COMPETITORS

Robert H. Herndon Memorial Science Competition

The essay competition is open to middle and high school students. The Essay Evaluation Committee of the Robert H. Herndon Memorial Science Competition will judge all essays. Winning students will receive prize, and awards will be given based on the merit of the essay submitted.

To participate in the essay competition, please complete the following steps:

Write an essay *exploring the theme* **Realizing Our Future in Space**. Topics can include any scientific discipline(s) of your choice such as biology, physics, astronomy, engineering, etc.

1. Submit the following documents by **March 7th, 2025**:
 - a. **Attendee Info:**
 - i. Please list participant name and Faculty/Parent contact
 - ii. **Please type information into online form**
 - b. **Essay Abstract** containing:
 - i. Essay Title
 - ii. **100–150 word paragraph describing the topic**
 - iii. Author's name
 - iv. Author's grade level
 - c. **Media Release Form:**
 - i. All students must provide an individual media release.
 - ii. Download form and return via email to herndonscience@aero.org
 - iii. The media release form can be found on the Herndon Science Competition website.
2. Submit **FINAL** online, **original** 500-word (minimum) essay by **May 2, 2025 at 11:59 PM**:
 - a. **All essays will be checked for plagiarism prior to judging.** Essays found to be plagiarized will be disqualified and the author may not attend the competition.
 - b. Essays must follow the proper research-paper format, including title page and bibliography or list of references.
 - c. There is a **4-page** length limit for Middle School and **5-page** limit for High School.
 - i. Title page and bibliography do not count towards length limit.
 - ii. Font should be at least 12-point size and single spaced.
 - d. Student's name should only be on the title page.
 - e. Essays must be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word document file e-mail attachment to herndonscience@aero.org. **PDF submissions will not be accepted.**
3. Attend the competition on **May 22nd, 2025**. You must be present to receive a prize.

We look forward to your participation and to seeing you on May 22nd 2025!

If you have any questions, please contact: herndonscience@aero.org.

SAMPLE ESSAY FORMAT

The essay should follow the format shown below. In addition, attempt to address the questions listed within each section.

Section 1: Title Page

- Provide the Student Name and School
- Provide the Essay Title

Section 2: Abstract (see example previous page)

- Provide a clear statement of the topic being considered
- Provide a short summary of essay contents and any conclusion you have drawn

Section 3: Introduction/Background

- Describe the topic or technology
- Discuss the history and evolution of the topic/technology
- Discuss the development of alternative technologies

Section 4: Main Body (this may contain several subsections)

- Provide a detailed description of topic/technology
- Discuss key current technical directions and challenges
- Discuss applications of the technology (present and future)
- Compare with alternative technologies. Describe the relative advantages/disadvantages
- Provide an example of how/why this technology is beneficial
- Describe future directions of the technology
- Provide a discussion of the business opportunities: what are the most important enabling technologies, more cost-effective alternative enabling technologies.
- Identify the major vendors selling the technology
- Identify the major customers buying the technology
- Identify the important scientists/engineers/companies that have developed the technology
- Describe how this technology impacts society/people (good & bad)

Section 5: Summary/Conclusion

- Summarize future of the topic/technology
- Include your opinion for possible new/unforeseen applications, problems, or limitations.

Section 6: Bibliography

- List all reference sources used in the essay and the location of the source
- *****Plagiarism is Illegal***** Do not copy information directly from a source without referencing the sources appropriately using in-text citations and bibliography entries.
 - **Example In-Text Citation**
 - Human beings have been described as "symbol-using animals" (Burke, 3).
(Author's Name, Page Number)
 - **Example Bibliography Entry**
 - Burke, Kenneth. *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.

JUDGES' WORKSHEET FOR ESSAY COMPETITION

(Note: This is just a guide. Record your final scores in the Essay scoring spreadsheet)

	Min					Max					Score
INITIAL PLANNING											
1. Did the student do adequate research on the chosen topic?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
2. Has the approach in the essay been well thought out and organized?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
3. Was the topic appropriate for the essay competition?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
LEVEL OF EFFORT, ORGANIZATION, AND INITIATIVE											
4. Has reasonable technical depth been demonstrated for the grade level?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
QUALITY OF ANALYTICAL WORK											
5. Has a reasonable hypothesis or analytical model been developed?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
6. Is there evidence of creative thinking in the development of the method used?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
7. Are the results or conclusions displayed in an easily easily understood manner?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
PRESENTATION											
8. Do the results or conclusion relate back to the hypothesis?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
9. Were the conclusions supported by the argument given?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
10. Was the report clear, easy to follow and grammatically well-written?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
11. Was the student's understanding of the work clearly evident?	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____				
							Total Score	_____			

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXPERIMENT TEAMS

Robert H. Herndon Memorial Science Competition

The Aerospace selection committee reviews experiment abstracts to determine which experiments will be invited to participate in the final judging. Qualifying experiments will be accepted in the order in which they are received until the maximum number of entrants is reached.

Each member of the winning team will be awarded a prize. A first, second, and third place team will be selected for middle school participants and high school participants.

To participate in the experiment competition, complete the following steps:

1. The faculty advisor selects a team of up to **3** students for the experiment. Team members will be verified one week prior to the event.
2. Submit the following documents by **May 2nd, 2025**:
 - a. **Attendees List:**
 - i. Please complete the online registration form with all team members (3 max)
 - b. **Project Abstract:**
 - i. Please submit a written project abstract (see example abstract on page 6)
 - ii. **Variations of previous HSC experiments entered within the last 3 years WILL NOT be accepted.**
 - c. **Media Release Form:**
 - i. All students must provide an individual media release form. Please download the form and return via email to herndonscience@aero.org
3. **DO NOT** put your school's name on *clothing*, experiment project, or any printed materials or other items that the judges will see.
 - a. **DO NOT** reveal your school's name during your presentation.
 - b. Each school will be assigned an ID number to maintain objectivity during judging.
4. Prepare & rehearse a presentation for live, in-person judging. Each team will present a **six-to-eight-minute** oral presentation discussing their hypothesis, assumptions, experiment setup, analysis, and conclusions. Our judges will review all projects.
5. Attend the competition on **May 22nd, 2025**. You must be present to receive a prize.

Please use the included Experiment Judge's Worksheet (see page# 7) as a resource to see exactly what the judges are looking for when they are evaluating your project and presentation.

CANCELTATION POLICY: In case you are unable to attend the event please inform us ASAP.

We look forward to your participation and to seeing you on May 22nd. If you have any questions, you may contact herndonscience@aero.org

SAMPLE EXPERIMENT ABSTRACT

Robert H. Herndon Memorial Science Competition

School Name:

Faculty Advisor:

School Address:

School Phone:

Project Category: Environmental Science

The (school name) Project Team will explore the technical and financial feasibility of powering a house solely from solar energy. Solar energy will replace the “grid” connection to electricity and natural gas. To determine technical feasibility, we will construct a model house (that will fit on a 3’x6’ table) that will have all the wiring and conduits needed to provide sufficient electricity, room heat, and water heat from solar sources only. To demonstrate financial feasibility, we will conduct a six-week survey of electricity and natural gas usage at our homes, determining the cost of the power used, the maximum daily kilowatt-hours and the peak instantaneous load. We will also investigate the cost of a solar-powered system to replace these requirements and determine the payback time, assuming an 8% per annum cost.

JUDGE'S WORKSHEET FOR 2024 HERNDON SCIENCE EXPERIMENT COMPETITION

PROJECT ID# _____

TITLE OF PROJECT: _____

	Min	Max	Score				
1. ORIGINALITY	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>In terms of the scientific method, is the experiment original? Did it involve new approaches to solving an old problem?</i>							
2. COMPREHENSION OF THE PROBLEM	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Did the project adequately summarize the nature of the overall problem with appropriate use of scientific theory, terms, techniques, and methodologies?</i>							
3. ORGANIZATION AND COMPLETENESS	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Did the project have a well defined goal(s) or objective(s)? Did the presentation exhibit thoroughness?</i>							
4. APPROPRIATE SOLUTION	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Were different approaches for solving each problem or objective evaluated and was the appropriate solution selected?</i>							
5. PROJECT OBJECTIVES	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Did the experiment meet the defined main objective(s) of the project?</i>							
6. EFFORT AND MOTIVATION	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Was it evident that sufficient time and effort were spent in learning the required subject matter germane to the main project objective?</i>							
7. DISPLAY	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Were the visual displays clearly presented? Was it easy to understand the project without any verbal explanation?</i>							
8. ORAL PRESENTATION	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Did each team member's oral presentation demonstrate a thorough understanding of the project? Was the presentation completed within the allotted time?</i>							
9. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	0	1	2	3	4	5	_____
<i>Did answers to questions demonstrate each team member's thorough understanding of the project?</i>							

Total Score _____